

MARTIN ROCK

from "A Derive"

If I'm to break this thing open I'll need to go for a walk.

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If I'm to ~~break this thing open~~
move beyond the confines of my own ~~broken dimension~~
privileged drive
insubordinate yearning
ry earning

& into some semblance of ~~egalitarianism~~
nonviolent coexistence
amendment to the world around me

I'll need to ~~go for a walk.~~
move my body through space
time & the city

I'll need to become something like a ~~bat~~ without wings
toad a face

which can move in the rain & yet still be flattened

It was horrific
The rain today
My dog looked like hell when I got back home to her

We've [taken to leaving her] outside
I've [] on the deck
My wife & I've [] n a state of not-knowing
Heather

*

I feel it building in my sleep
I delude myself into thinking it's finished
~~I've found a way of arriving at order, which does not exist~~

On the street a broken lens I pick it up

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The thing is I'll need to be walking
I've already walked
I must sit down immediately

& write in my book

~~"I am in Houston with my dog."~~
"I am not in Houston with my dog."
"I am not in Houston without my dog."
~~"I am not in Houston without my dog."~~
"I am not in Houston without my not dog."
~~"I am not in Houston without my not dog."~~
"I am not in not Houston not without my not dog."

*

"I am in no city" & "I am in every
city" & "I am walking" & "I am not walking" & "I have a dog" &
"I have no dog" & even this is a horrific lie

(of course it is you scoff)

(you do not scoff)

(no one is ever scoffing)

“That’s wrong,” you do not say

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No one is ever missing.

*

& for a while the walk is productive. I’m walking my dog. I’m not walking my dog but that my dog is walking me. Neither of us think much about the nature of our walk. We’re walking & in my head I’m trying to derive (Really, though, I’m trying to write about a derive I’m supposed to be experiencing, which is the goddamned truth about a derive). I’ve just lied to you again. I think about the nature of our walking a great deal on my walk. Even when I walk without my dog now, for instance, she’s walking with me, keeping me preoccupied, worrying me with her state of not-knowing. Since “rescuing” her, I’ve taken my dog into the way I think of myself as a self. & on our walk, nearly at the end, I begin to repeat this phrase: “If I’m to break this thing open I’ll need to go for a walk.” And the phrase begins to break apart in my mouth, in my head before it is in my mouth. “If I’m to” “break this thing” “open I’ll need to go for a walk.” “If I’m to break this thing” “open I’ll need to go for a walk.” I don’t say it out loud. I pass people with dogs on the street. My dog growls at them. I pass a mailman. She lunges. I don’t speak, or rather I do speak. I don’t speak. Hello, I say. Beautiful day. Sorry about the dog, I say. But behind it I’m thinking, “If I’m to break this thing open I’ll need to go

for a walk.” But I *am* walking, I think, even as my mind tells me (I tell myself?) I’ll need to “gopher a whalk” again in the not-present, even that I’ll need to do so infinitely. The walk is the place I know I’ll start my derive, but I’m already nearing the end, now, of my walk (this one I’m not taking now, as I write). I’m worried that I can’t stop the phrase from moving forward. An earworm. A gopherwhelk. I open the gate that leads to my house. The beginning becomes a kind of trap. The trap becomes a tarp. The tarp becomes a way of beginning. My idea about this thing I want to break open (what is *it*, anyway? productivity? a derive? the *truth?* – *ha!*) has become a silent tic, a keepsake, a thing to be held, a safety-pin. “If I’m to break this thing open,” But I want to unfasten it, to not-hold it, but to not-drop it as well. “I’ll need to go for a walk” I want it to be somehow unproductive. I want it to lie. I want the lie to reveal the truth. Damn it I want there to be a truth.